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COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

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SUBJECT Reconstruction and Maneuvers at Finsterwalde Airfield

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1. Reconstruction and enlargement of Finsterwalde airfield (A15), begun in May 1947, was finished between 7 and 10 April 1948. The last German workers, numbering about 600 men, were shipped to an unknown destination by rail on 15 May, accompanied by a strong detail of NVD troops.
2. Security measures have so far prevented any estimate of the present size of the field or the number of aircraft stationed on it. In August 1947 a four kilometer area around the field was blocked off. It has been established, however, that fighter maneuvers were held between 4 and 19 May with more than 100 aircraft of a new fighter type participating. Exercises took place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during that period, at which time the Finsterwalde-Galau-Kletwitz (A15-A-26-A24) triangle was declared a prohibited zone. YAK-2s patrolled this triangle, firing at anything seen on the roads; on 14 May, two Spreenberg women were killed in this fashion.

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Comment: This is the first report concerning enlargement of Finsterwalde, a field which has not had much previous coverage. On 1 April 1947 its installations were said to be in good condition; they consisted of 15 permanent barracks, 4 hangers, 6 small undescribed buildings, and several temporary barracks. Except for hangar aprons, there were no concrete strips and the taxi strip was paved with ashes. An October 1947 report stated that barracks were occupied by SAF personnel on 20 October but only two U-2 planes were seen on the runway. Local residents said that the field was often unoccupied. It appears somewhat unlikely that a prohibited zone existing since August 1947 should not have been noticed.

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3. On or about 15 May, Soviet tanks were said to have been arriving, from the southeast, in the Gollnitz (A26)-Göllnitz (A25) area. At approximately the same time, tanks were being grouped near Beetz bei Somerfeld (A97).

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